



**Ambassador Lewis Lukens Remarks**

**Peace Corps Swearing-In**

**Dakar, Sénégal**

**Friday, 10 May, 2013**

*(As prepared)*

*Monsieur le Ministre, le Secrétaire Général de la Présidence de la République,*

*Monsieur le Directeur Général de la Santé.*

[Messieurs les Ambassadeurs] -- tbc

*Messieurs les Représentants des corps de volontaires nationaux et internationaux*

*Monsieur le Directeur du Corps de la Paix,*

*Mesdames, Mesdemoiselles, Messieurs les Invités,*

*Chers Volontaires et Stagiaires.*

C'est un grand honneur d'être invité à présider cette cérémonie qui marque le cinquantième anniversaire du Corps de la Paix au Sénégal. Le travail des Volontaires du Corps de la Paix est très important et leur implication dans les communautés du Sénégal est un exemple du meilleur esprit du peuple Américain.

J'ai eu l'opportunité d'avoir vu leur travail partout au Sénégal et je suis fier d'eux.

Récemment, j'ai visité une volontaire près de Toubacouta. Elle s'appelle Venchele Saint-Dic. Elle fait une quantité incroyable de travail en matière de santé: la prévention du paludisme, l'amélioration de l'assainissement, de l'eau potable, et de la nutrition - elle touche littéralement à tous les principaux défis de santé publique au Sénégal. Elle est une seule volontaire, mais le genre de travail qu'elle fait sera multiplié par 37 par les nouveaux volontaires que vous voyez ici.

C'est clair que les relations entre les volontaires et leurs communautés sont très étroites. Dans la région de Kédougou, j'ai rencontré M. Ibrahima Badji, le chef de poste de santé de Dindéfelo, qui était l'homologue de Chris Hedrick, le directeur national du Corps de la Paix,

quand il était volontaire dans le village de Dindfelo il y a 25 ans. M. Badji est toujours le cher ami de Chris et le partenaire des volontaires aujourd’hui.

Il faut m’excuser, mes amis Sénégalais, mais je vais continuer maintenant en anglais, parce qu’il y a quelques volontaires ici qui comprennent mieux le Wolof, le Pulaar, le Jaxanke et le Séer que le Français.

I am delighted to welcome all of you to my residence and to this ceremony. It is a privilege for me to be with such distinguished guests and to have the opportunity to swear into service the 37 Peace Corps trainees sitting before me.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps in Senegal. What an honor to have the chance to unveil this magnificent tapestry to mark the occasion.

You join the largest Peace Corps program in Africa. You should be proud to contribute to a program that is widely thought of as the most innovative and effective in all of Peace Corps. You have an important responsibility to continue that tradition as we head into the second half-century of Peace Corps’ work here and around the world.

I congratulate and thank the staff at the Thiès training center who played an essential role in helping you become prepared for your assignments. I also thank in advance all the officials here whose organizations and offices will help host you and support your work in your communities.

Peace Corps embodies the best of America: service to others in the pursuit of peace and development. Many say, and I agree, that it is America’s best foreign policy value.

You will do important work, both individually in each of your communities, and as teams, as your fellow Volunteers have done. The health volunteers who served before you have done tremendous work in helping the people of Senegal fight malaria, improve access to clean water and sanitation, and enhance nutrition.

The Peace Corps program in Senegal has a long and rich history. It is a true partnership between the people and government of Senegal and the United States. Since the arrival of the first group in 1963, over 3,000 Volunteers have completed their service to the people of Senegal. This year you become part of a proud family and tradition of making the world a better place.

Our former Volunteers have become business leaders, members of Congress, educators, and diplomats. The Peace Corps program has equally benefited both the people of Senegal and the United States.

As you prepare to begin your assignments in community health, I congratulate each of you on your successful completion of training and wish you well as you integrate into your communities. While I serve as Ambassador to Senegal, in many ways, you will be ambassadors in your respective communities.

On behalf of the United States government, I thank you for your commitment, and I wish you all the best for your service to come.

Now, please rise and repeat after me as I administer the oath of service.

I (state your name), do solemnly swear (or affirm)

That I will support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies, domestic or foreign,

That I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion,

And that I will well and faithfully discharge my duties in the Peace Corps,

So help me God.

Congratulations! You are now Peace Corps Volunteers!

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